

# **Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Investment Strategies Committee**

## **Final Meeting Summary**

*Approved May 10, 2000*

**April 12, 2000**

**Present:** Dale Stedman, Chair, Bill Lampson, Vice-Chair, Ted Bottiger, Don Briscoe, Representative Shirley Hankins, Peter Hurley, Bettie Ingham, Andrew Johnsen, Charles Mott

**Absent:** Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, John Kelly, Patricia Otley

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Committee reviewed the summary of the March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting and approved it as presented.

### **Public Comment**

Ron Scheck, Transit Solutions, distributed copies of a summary of national transit trends observed over the past decade.

### **Developing Committee Options: “20-Year Investments”**

Kjris Lund, project manager for the Commission, presented an update on the Steering Committee’s discussions and activities regarding preparation for the full Commission retreat on May 18. Lund asked for the Investment Strategies Committee’s suggestions and ideas on a framework for organizing options that will be shared with the public to stimulate discussion and receive public input. Peter Hurley suggested that the Commission frame the options by the types of major improvements that would result – a vision-driven framework rather than a revenue-driven framework. Gerry Cormick, consultant to the Commission, noted that the Commission is wrestling with three issues in deciding on a framework: how to represent the options, the interdependence of certain options, and the building-block nature of certain options. Lund also shared common themes emerging from the five Committees.

Lund reviewed the components of a Committee report to be written by staff. The report will summarize the work coming from the Investment Strategies Committee on the options and will be circulated to the full Commission. She also reviewed the Commission’s schedule through the end of the summer, and asked Commissioners to set aside June 19 as a tentative date for another meeting. Lund sought volunteers from the Committee to work with staff on transportation system modeling projects over the

summer. Peter Hurley suggested that due to budget and time constraints, the Committee and staff should work on a set of evaluation criteria for investments rather than a complex model.

The Chair commented on an article from the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, which reported that only 22 people attended two heavily promoted hearings held the previous evening on Spokane's street repairs and maintenance needs. The Committee discussed the importance of the public input process and the Committee's ability to respond to that public input.

Cormick led the Committee in discussing a draft list of options regarding 20-Year Investments that staff had prepared. The following summary organizes the comments by the corresponding option.

## B1

General consensus was achieved that the state needs to promote regional empowerment in order to make coordinated investment decisions. Nevertheless, three sets of decision-making, planning, and funding authorities will continue to exist: the state level, which is concerned with corridors of statewide significance; the regional level, which is seeing an increasing number of significant projects; and the local level. Those levels also represent three areas in which to invest. Committee members noted that improved analysis resulting from different perspectives can be an advantage of regionalizing transportation investment decision-making. Also, a regional approach can serve as a bridge between the Washington State Department of Transportation and local stakeholders.

It was suggested the Committee have a conversation to clarify its goals and visions. The Chair commented that in generating a list of investment strategy options, a vision will be shaped. He added that a vision will become clearer after the Committee receives public input regarding the options. He also noted that because each stakeholder has a particular agenda and goal for the state transportation system, it might be difficult to create a cohesive vision.

## B2

Some Committee members raised concern with the words "All Jurisdictions." It was noted that some rural and other jurisdictions should not be required to conduct an extensive planning process that will not ultimately change investment decisions. It is unnecessary to spend time and money considering options that are not appropriate or feasible for a particular jurisdiction. The goal of the Committee in option B2 is to encourage decision-makers at all levels to consider and engage in discussions about a range of transportation investment options that they may not have previously considered.

B3

Strike “traffic” and replace with “transportation.” The Committee requested additional financial information from staff on this option.

B4

Adopt language used in A3, on More Efficient Use of Transportation Facilities. It was suggested that replacing “all jurisdictions” with “state, regional, and local jurisdictions” in A3 would be consistent, clearer, and more explanatory.

B5

Delete this option as the idea is already addressed in A2. Take out reference to B5 in B3.

B6

Strike the word “urban.” A suggestion was made to reword the option to say, “Recognize the investments needed at each level” and include the following table. The Committee will discuss this issue further at its next meeting. Members expanded on a three-tier framework for transportation investment that was discussed earlier in the meeting.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Type of Investment</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
T1	Preservation Maintenance Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ All modes</li><li>▪ All jurisdictions</li></ul>	Existing Funds
T2	Statewide Priority Corridors	Statewide Revenue Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Flexible</li></ul>
T3	Regional Priority Corridors Local Priority Corridors	Regional Revenue Source Local Revenue Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Regional equity</li><li>▪ Possibly flow from mobility funds</li></ul>

The Committee acknowledged that this option would require action by the legislature.

B7

Delete this option regarding ballot box determination of regional transportation revenue and authority since the idea is already addressed in A1.

B8

Combine this option with B6, which discusses regional equity.

## B9

Delete this option as it is being discussed by the Revenue Committee.

## B10

The language in B10, the land use planning option, should be made stronger and should include specific examples. Reword “should be more closely linked” to “is a critical and inextricable link.”

Some members voiced concern that such a mandate would impose overly large costs on smaller jurisdictions. It was suggested that the Committee recommend incentives rather than mandates. There was general agreement on the importance of the land use and transportation connection, but concerns emerged on how to it should be strengthened.

## B11

Four categories of investments in “smart growth” were identified: (1) direct financial investment in “smart growth” projects; (2) elimination of barriers to “smart growth”; (3) resources for jurisdictions to develop “smart growth” plans; and (4) incentives for “smart growth.” The Committee requested that staff review the Land Use and Transportation issue paper for specific “smart growth” policy options to include in a revised option B11.

Some Committee members raised concern with the phrase “smart growth,” suggesting it could have a negative connotation. A suggestion was made to replace “smart growth” with “high density.” A Committee member noted that some federal funds available in the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) are driven by “smart growth.” The Committee asked staff to rewrite the option in such a way that “smart growth” is not the lead-in term but serves as the definitional term.

## B12

Rewrite to include specific policies to achieve affordable housing, such as location-efficient mortgages, reduced parking minimums, and transfer of development credits.

## B13

Reword “Incentives should be considered *to* encourage use” to read “Incentives should be considered *which would* encourage use.”

Add the following bulleted items:

- park & ride lots
- employer-paid transit pass
- FlexCar (car-sharing)

The Committee requested additional information from staff regarding cost and benefit projections.

#### B14

It was suggested that the Committee make regional or statewide integration of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) one of its priority investment strategies. Integration of the technology would generate benefits far greater than using the technology in isolated instances. The Committee requested additional information from staff regarding cost and benefit projections.

#### B15

It was suggested that the Committee generate an option regarding investment in human resources such as training, skill building, and professional opportunities. One member provided notes for staff to review and incorporate into options.

### **Washington's Passenger Rail**

Kenneth Uznanski, Jr., Rail Office Manager, led a team from the Washington State Department of Transportation's Passenger Rail Division in presenting an overview of passenger rail in Washington. Stephen Anderson of WSDOT described the origins, successes, and future plans of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor and provided a detailed look at why the passenger rail corridor is a good investment, even for other modes of transportation.

Anderson differentiated among different types of rail passenger systems and specified that his discussion would be focused on a regional rail corridor. The Pacific Northwest Corridor, named Amtrak Cascades, stretches 466 miles from Vancouver, B.C., to Eugene, Oregon. It serves a rapidly growing population of 8 million people, and it is one of eight federally designated high-speed rail corridors. The service is a product of public-private joint investment and development. The operating funds for the trains are received from ticket-buying passengers, Amtrak, and the states of Washington and Oregon.

In 1992, the High-Speed Ground Transportation Study made several findings including the following: (1) population is rapidly increasing and will continue to increase; (2) intercity travel is increasing more rapidly than population – the number of trips made in the corridor will increase 75 percent by the year 2020.

Anderson listed the benefits of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, which he believes place rail investment on par with overall economic investment:

- Maintains the Pacific Northwest quality of life;
- Provide economic vitality in this region;
- Safer than other modes;
- Cost-effective;
- Coordination among modes improves mobility for all modes;
- Freight moves more fluidly to and from ports;
- Decreased congestion on highways; and
- Improved air quality.

The WSDOT Rail office is using an entrepreneurial approach to achieve synergy among modes; examples of these programs are the “Grain Train” and the “Apple Express.” More opportunities exist for public-private partnerships, such as NAFTA and overnight intermodal freight service.

The WSDOT Rail office is using an incremental or progressive approach to making capacity service improvements in the corridor. The idea is to design ways to build the service block by block. The benefits of this type of approach include (1) investments are made a little at a time; (2) you can make sure that you have done everything right; (3) improvements are immediately useful; (4) customer demand drives service improvements and other investments. This approach has been successful: ridership in 1999 was 2.5 times that in 1993; revenue in 1999 was 4 times that in 1993; and Amtrak Cascades has been ranked number one in the nation in customer satisfaction for the past three years.

The estimated cost for improving the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor is \$2.1 billion. The state’s responsibility is currently \$1.1 billion, but potential sources of funding to cover a part of that exist at the federal level.

Jim Slakey, Public Transportation and Rail Division Director, briefly summarized the successes and benefits of the Pacific Northwest Corridor. Slake urged the Committee to keep in mind multi-modal choices in transportation investments, and he emphasized the importance of public-private initiatives.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 10, 2000, 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**, in the SeaTac Room at the SeaTac Holiday Inn.

The Committee adjourned at 4:00 p.m.